

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0006
(916) 319-2006
FAX (916) 319-2106

DISTRICT OFFICE
3501 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE, SUITE 412
SAN RAFAEL, CA 94903
(415) 479-4920
FAX (415) 479-2123

<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a06>

Assembly California Legislature



JARED HUFFMAN
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SIXTH DISTRICT

COMMITTEES
CHAIR, WATER, PARKS AND
WILDLIFE
BUDGET
NATURAL RESOURCES
UTILITIES AND COMMERCE

BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE NO.3
ON RESOURCES

June 28, 2011

John Laird, Natural Resources Agency Secretary
Executive Committee, Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision
Resources Building
1416 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: First Meeting of Fish and Wildlife Strategic Vision (AB 2376) Executive
Committee

Dear Secretary Laird and Executive Committee Members:

I am pleased the Executive Committee to implement AB 2376 is holding its first meeting today. I regret I am unable to be with you personally, but am simultaneously chairing a hearing of the Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee, while serving on the Judiciary Committee and presenting several bills in the Senate, so I appreciate you allowing staff to read this letter into the record. I also want to thank the Governor and Secretary Laird for moving forward on implementing AB 2376 and to each of you for serving on the committee.

The Department of Fish and Game, as the chief public trustee for California's Fish and Wildlife, along with the Fish and Game Commission, share what I believe is one of the most important missions in state government. The mission of the Department is to manage California's diverse fish, wildlife, and plant resources, and the habitats upon which they depend, for their ecological values and for their use and enjoyment by the public. AB 2376 was introduced with the intent of enhancing and strengthening the ability of the Department and Commission to fulfill that mission, and not in any way to diminish it. AB 2376 was the product of several years of discussions regarding the challenges faced by the Department in managing and protecting California's wildlife in a state with an ever-growing population and competing and often conflicting demands on its natural resources. California is also a state of incredible natural beauty and wildlife resources, much of which is threatened and at risk of being lost. Examples include our iconic salmon runs and native trout, in addition to many land based species.

Due to DFG's role as public trustee of our fish and wildlife resources, having a robust department is essential to accomplishing many of our most important goals in California, including restoration of the Delta ecosystem, siting of renewable energy projects, and



preparing for climate change adaptation. We also need to be engaged in proactive and effective habitat conservation efforts statewide so that we can prevent species from getting to the point where they need to be considered for listing on the endangered species list, a process which currently takes up an inordinate amount of the Department's and the Commission's time.

In February of 2010 the Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee which I chair held a day long oversight hearing that brought together experts in the areas of fish and game management, environmental law, and habitat conservation, as well as landowners, renewable energy developers, recreational users, and others to discuss what can be done to strengthen the state's ability to more effectively manage fish and wildlife resources for the benefit of the resources themselves and for the people of the state. While we didn't necessarily reach a consensus on the solutions, there were a number of common themes that emerged from the hearing, and were consistent with other themes we have heard in previous stakeholder discussions. A few of those common themes are:

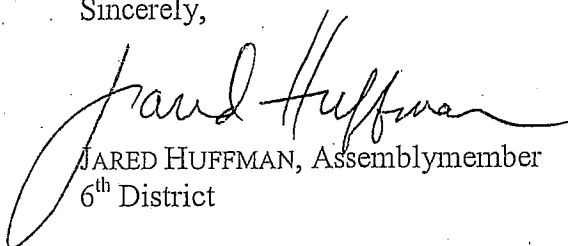
- A recognized need by all for comprehensive strategic reform;
- The need for increased investment and new dedicated funding sources to reduce dependence on the state's General Fund and on traditional users;
- The need for greater clarity between the roles of the department and commission;
- The need for enhanced scientific capacity and partnerships;
- The need for greater land conservation incentives;
- The need for database system modernization and transparency.

Many of these issues have been longstanding and cumulative over time, as DFG's responsibilities have increased, and the challenges and stresses on California's wildlife have grown exponentially. Other states are also grappling with these issues, and the hope was that we might learn from their experiences, while recognizing that California, with its diversity of wildlife, habitats and people, is in many ways unique.

Over the years numerous reports have been issued identifying the need for reform of DFG. The intent of this bill was not to just produce another report to add to those already on the shelf, but to develop a strategic plan with specific recommendations that can actually be implemented, so that California may once again be recognized as the most forward thinking and progressive wildlife conservation state in the nation.

Thank you again for your important role in these efforts. If there is any way that I or my staff can be of assistance to you as you undertake this very worthwhile and challenging project please let us know.

Sincerely,



JARED HUFFMAN, Assemblymember
6th District